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ABSTRACT

A study of five teachers and 316 junior high school physical education students reveals an unequal distribution of positive reinforcement teacher behavior among individual students. Factors influencing the amount of rewarding behavior directed to students include elements such as student gender, teacher perception of student skill level, student in-class personality, and customary amount of student class participation. Male students were found to receive a significantly larger amount of encouraging teacher attention than did female students in 18 of the 21 classes sampled. Teacher behavior patterns may reflect the teacher's situational reaction to class chemistry. Effective individualized inservice programs to aid in overcoming personal bias detrimental to the classroom situation are needed. (LH)

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TEACHER DIRECTED BEHAVIOR TOWARD INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to describe the quality and quantity of Individualized Teacher Behavior (ITB) that male and female Junior High school physical education teachers direct to their students and to determine the degree to which these behaviors are related to:

1) Teacher perception of student skill performance
2) Teacher perception of student in-class personality
3) Teacher perception of student class participation and
4) Student gender

STUDY

The Individualized Teacher Behavior Analysis System (ITBAS), developed by Dr. George T. Lewis (University of Massachusetts) was used to systematically collect and describe 8 categories of teacher directed behavior toward individual students. These behaviors:

(1) accepts students feelings
(2) praises and encourages
(3) accepts students ideas
(4) asks questions
(5) Lecturing
(6) gives directions
(7) criticizing or justifying authority
(8) total teacher directed behavior

were then analyzed in terms of their relationship to student gender and teacher perception rankings for student in-class personality, skill level and participation.

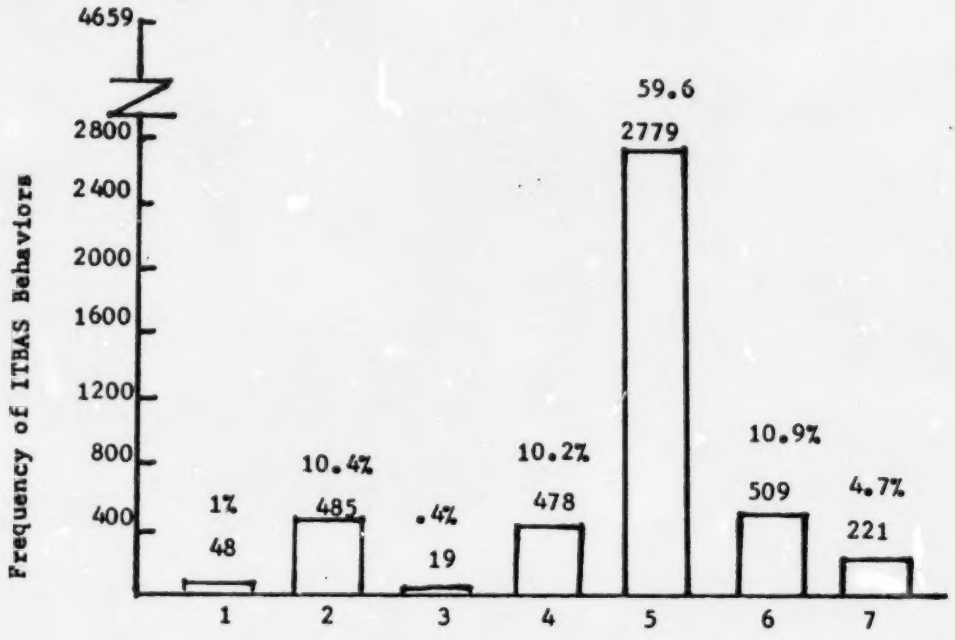
The study was conducted in a regional junior high school consisting of 7th, 8th and 9th grade classes. Subjects consisted of 5 teachers (each teacher having at least 9 years experience) and 316 students (from 10 different classes - two classes for each teacher). Individualized teacher behaviors were collected during three (3) on-site observation sessions with each class. A set of previously developed ranking procedures were then administered to each teacher, following all observations, to collect teacher perception of students in their classes on each of the three variables (in-class personality, skill, and participation).

RESULTS

Description of Individualized Teacher Behaviors

Figure I presents the distribution of (ITBs) by ITBAS categories for the entire study - this figure shows that 60 percent of

teacher directed behavior toward individual students was providing information or lecturing. Teachers giving directions, asking questions and providing praise and encouragement occurred with approximately the same frequency, each about 10 percent of total ITBS. Criticizing or justifying authority accounted for 5 percent of the total behavior. Less than 1% of the behavior was accounted for in each of the categories: accepting a student's ideas and accepting a student's feelings.



Behaviors by ITBAS Categories

1) accept's a students feelings
2) praises and encourages
3) accept's a students ideas
4) asks questions
5) lectures
6) gives directions
7) criticizes or justifies authority

FIGURE 1 DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER BEHAVIORS BY ITBAS CATEGORY FOR THE ENTIRE STUDY

An analysis of the behavior distribution for the two observed classes taught by each teacher indicates that the total ITB's varied substantially from class to class except for Teacher 4. Also it should be noted that Teacher 4 emitted far fewer behaviors than his colleagues. The mean freguency of total behavior per class was 466 behavior counts and 932 counts per teacher.

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of individualized teacher behaviors across the student population. 59 students or 19% of the student population were the targets of 50% of the total individualized teacher behaviors, ranging from 23 to 97 individualized teacher behaviors counts. 257 students or 81% of the population were the targets of remaining 50% individualized teacher behavior, ranging from 0 to 22 behavior counts per student. 9 students in the population received no individualized teacher behaviors directed toward them.

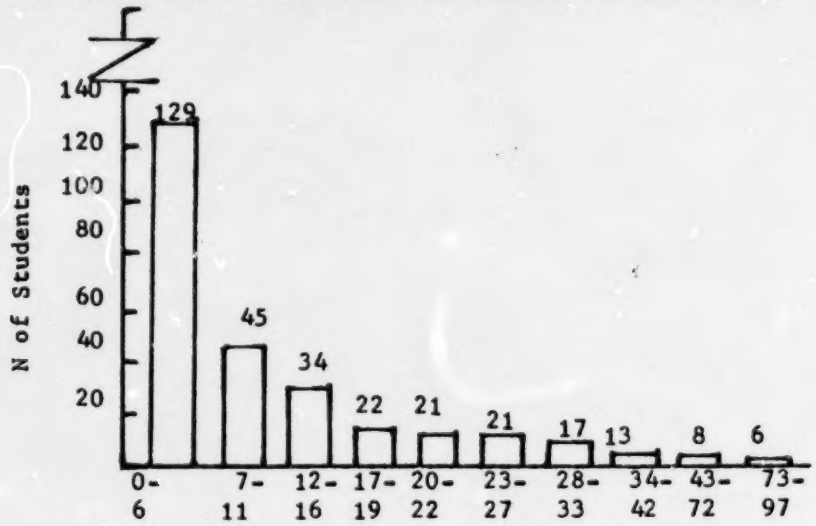


Figure 2 - DISTRIBUTION OF ITB ACROSS THE STUDENT POPULATION

Group Comarisons

A 2 sample-median statistical analysis was employed to determine the degree to which ITB's are related to three previously mentioned variables of teacher perceptions of students and student gender. The results revealed the uniqueness of teacher and classes with regard to rates and kinds of ITB. In most cases, they are situation specific and cannot be generalized across all teachers or all classes.

Skill

In 4 out of 5 teachers and 5 out of 10 classes they taught, observed significant results were found analyzing the relationship of ITB to teacher rankings of student skill levels. Teacher 5 consistently directed more ITB to those students

perceived high on skill whereas Teachers 1 and 4 (6 out of 8 comparisons of students) targeted more ITBs to those students perceived low in skill. Categories of praise or encouragement, lecturing, giving directions, criticizing or justifying authority and total ITB were those behaviors which were directed in 16 out of 22 comparisons of students whose skill levels were high.

In-Class Personality

In 3 out of 5 teachers, 4 out of 10 classes, observed significant results were found when analyzing the relationship of ITB to teacher rankings of student in-class personality. Teachers 1 and 4 most consistently directed more ITB to students ranked as having least desirable personalities. Teacher 5, in only one significant finding, directed more ITB to students ranked as having most desirable personalities. ITBAS categories of asks questions, lecturing, giving directions, criticizing and justifying and total behavior were those behaviors found directed to students 9 out of 11 times to having ranked as least desirable personality.

Student Gender

In some classes and under some teachers boys received more behaviors associated with: praise, questioning, lecturing, directing, criticizing and justifying authority and total behavior then did girls. These results establish a clear pattern in that boys were favored over girls in 18 of the 21 cases in which significant differences were found.

Participation

In some classes and under some teachers, students perceived by their teachers as belonging to high or medium groups of participation received different amounts and types of teacher behavior than those students belonging to the lower groups. These results, however, do not form a clear pattern because of the degree to which they vary among the five teachers and 10 classes.

DISCUSSION

The unequal distribution of teacher behaviors directed toward individual students found in this study clearly supports the findings of similar studies previously conducted. (Crowe, 1977; Brophy and Good, 1970; Kranz and others, 1970) Support also is generated for those factors (student gender and teacher perceptions of student skill performance level, in-class personality and class participation) which may influence such unequal distributions of ITB.

An analysis of the findings for ITB in relationship to student gender and teacher perceptions of students by class indicate that to generalize across teacher populations is inaccurate. One conclusion which might be drawn from this analysis is that teacher behavior evolves from differing value structures resulting

in differential treatment of students. Further, it may be concluded that the quality of differential ITB distribution is a function the teacher being situationally reactive to the social chemistry of each class. If further research reveals supportive evidence to the above conclusions it becomes quite evident for the need to develop individualized in-service programs promoting teacher improvement and growth. Before such efforts are begun, however, the need remains for more in depth study of teacher behavior relative to the effects on each student.

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